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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

CIA Funds Aided Negro Registration

By Drew Pearson and
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It will be vociferously denied, but some of the South's most vocal opponents of civil rights have either overlooked or sanctioned under-the-table CIA aid to help Negro voting registration and militant civil rights groups.

The CIA money was funneled through private foundations right under the nose of the Central Intelligence Watchdog Committee headed by Sen. Dick Russell, Georgia Democrat, and Rep. Mendel Rivers, the South Carolina Democrat. Both have made speeches denouncing the civil rights movement. Yet they permitted CIA funds to go to civil rights groups in the same manner that CIA money went to student groups.

The disclosure emphasizes the importance of the drive led by Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.), and Sen. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), to put members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the CIA Watchdog group, now composed solely of members from the House and Senate Armed Services Committee. This drive was defeated last fall when Russell emphatically proclaimed that his committee knew what CIA was doing. Obviously it didn't.

On the Watchdog Committee, in addition to Russell and

Rivers, are such Southern stalwarts as John Stennis (D-Miss.), Sam Ervin (D-N.C.), and Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) together with O. C. Fisher (Tex.), Elliott Hagan (Ga.), and Alton Lennon (N.C.) — all Democrats.

CIA's Secret Channels

The main conduit for CIA money to help the Negro voter registration drive was the Southern Regional Council, which received \$60,000 of CIA funds in 1963. The money was channeled through the New World Foundation.

In 1962, \$6000 of CIA funds went to the Southern Regional Council through the Aaron E. Norman Fund. In 1962, the Georgia Council on Human Relations also got \$2600 of CIA money from the Norman Fund.

The National Student Association, which received massive contributions of CIA money, was also encouraged by the CIA to push voter registration drives in the South. Justification for using CIA funds was to quiet disastrous foreign publicity caused by civil rights violence.

The Norman Fund, incidentally, has also contributed to CORE's scholarship and educational fund, the Lawyers' Constitutional Defense Committee, and the League for Industrial Democracy, all vigorous civil rights advocates.

Note: Fund officials deny

any knowledge of CIA financial ties; nevertheless they are a fact.

One Man-One Vote

A drive to head off the first Federal Constitutional Convention in U.S. history has been started in legislatures which hitherto voted for such a convention. The drive is led by Illinois State Sen. Paul Simon of Troy, Ill., home state of a man who has chiefly sponsored the convention, Sen. Everett Dirksen, who wants to nullify the Supreme Court's one man-one vote ruling.

Though Dirksen's home legislature passed a resolution favoring a Constitutional Convention in order to overturn the Supreme Court, the Illinois legislature has now found that the Supreme Court was right and that the equalization of representation in the legislature has worked for Illinois's general benefit. It has also, incidentally, increased Republican representation, having given more votes to the suburbs around Chicago than to sparsely populated downstate Illinois.

Despite this, Dirksen helped to sneak resolutions through 32 state legislatures favoring the convention. Never before in the 180-year history of the United States has the Nation ever held a convention to change the Constitution; nor has it come this close. Only

two more states are needed to get the required number of legislatures on record.

This is why Sen. Simon, a member of the Illinois legislature, which has already voted for the convention, has introduced a resolution to "rescind the previous action." He has also written to the majority and minority leaders of every House and Senate in the 50 states urging similar action. In his letter, Sen. Simon points out how easy it is for state legislatures to go on record for a Constitutional Convention.

"There is no statutory framework for a Federal Constitutional convention," Sen. Simon wrote his fellow legislators. "There is some question whether such a Convention can be limited to one topic."

This means that a Constitutional Convention could result in a fundamental challenge to our basic freedoms.

"Under area representation, in the past half century, gross inequalities in representation became part of the American scene," writes Sen. Simon. "In Nevada, 8 per cent of the population controlled one house of the legislature; in California, one district had 9,038,771 voters and another district 14,294. Are we serious about wanting to return to such a system?"

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